

## Archbishop Sherrington announces theme for Day for Life in Annunciation reflection

**A**rchbishop John Sherrington has announced the theme for this year's Day for Life in a reflection for the Feast of the Annunciation.



In his contemplation on the Virgin Mary's 'Yes', Archbishop Sherrington calls to mind that:

"God chose to enter the world as an unborn child, embracing the fullness of human existence from its earliest stage. His coming reveals that at every point of development, the child in the womb is a unique and irreplaceable human person. This truth is now even reflected in certain civil procedures such as the granting of baby loss certificates to bereaved parents who lose a little one during pregnancy."

Turning towards the Day for Life, Archbishop Sherrington announced:

"This same truth will form the theme of the forthcoming Day for Life, which will take place on Sunday, 21 June. The day will invite us to reflect on the humanity of the unborn and to acknowledge with compassion the deep grief experienced by parents who lose a child before or shortly after birth." The full reflection can be found below.

### Reflection for the Feast of the Annunciation

"On 25 March, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation which commemorates the visit of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and her 'Yes' in response to the message that she would miraculously conceive by the Holy Spirit.

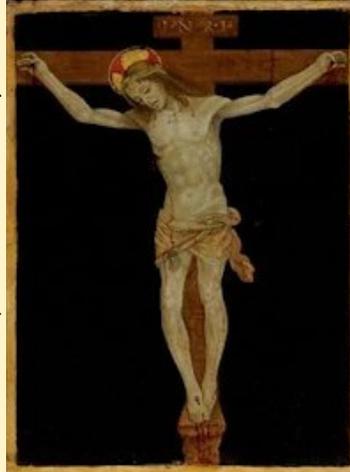
"Most importantly, this Feast celebrates the very moment of Christ's conception, when 'the Word became Flesh' (John 1:14). For this reason, this day has traditionally also been known as the Feast of the Incarnation.

"St Maximilian Kolbe described the Incarnation as the moment when 'all of Heaven meets all of the earth,' calling it the 'highest expression of love'. For centuries, the Church has honoured this moment through the Angelus prayer. In this short prayer, we alternate between reciting the scriptural lines of the Annunciation and the Hail Mary, bowing at the words: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. The prayer is traditionally said daily at 6am, 12 noon, and 6pm, which is why many Catholic churches still ring their bells at midday. Wider society has also recognised the significance of this moment. Historically, in the United Kingdom, 25 March marked the start of the new tax year, aligning the civic calendar with the beginning of Christ's life on earth ...

To read more: [Archbishop Sherrington announces theme for Day for Life in Annunciation reflection - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

## All Is Fulfilled

"All this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled," Jesus says in today's Gospel (see Matthew 26:56).



Indeed, we have reached the climax of the liturgical year, the highest peak of salvation history, when all that has been anticipated and promised is to be fulfilled.

By the close of today's long Gospel, the work of our redemption will have been accomplished: the new covenant will be written in the blood of His broken body hanging on the Cross at the place called the Skull.

In His Passion, Jesus is "counted among the wicked," as Isaiah had foretold (see Isaiah 53:12). He is revealed definitively as the Suffering Servant the prophet announced, the long-awaited Messiah whose words of obedience and faith ring out in today's First Reading and Psalm.

The taunts and torments we hear in these two readings punctuate the Gospel as Jesus is beaten and mocked (see Matthew 27:31), as His hands and feet are pierced, as enemies gamble for His clothes (see Matthew 27:35), and as His enemies dare Him to prove His divinity by saving Himself from suffering (see Matthew 27:39-44).

He remains faithful to God's will to the end. He does not turn back in His trial. He gives Himself freely to His torturers, confident that, as He speaks in today's First Reading, "The Lord God is My help ... I shall not be put to shame."

Destined to sin and death as children of Adam's disobedience, we have been set free for holiness and life by Christ's perfect obedience to the Father's will (see Romans 5:12-14, 17-19; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6).

This is why God greatly exalted Him. This is why we have salvation in His name. Following His example of humble obedience in the trials and crosses of our lives, we know we will never be forsaken. We know, as the centurion realizes today, that truly this is the Son of God (see Matthew 27:54).

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs  
Vale of White Horse  
Pastoral Area

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## PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD YEAR A

### Entrance Antiphon: Mt 21:9

Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna in the highest.

### First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

### Responsorial Psalm: Ps 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

### Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

### Gospel Acclamation:

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Christ became for us obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

**Gospel:** Matthew 26:14-27:66

**Communion Antiphon:** Mt 26:42

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

### SATURDAY 28th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Vocations

4:30 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Patricia Fletcher RIP (Jane Hemery)

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Chris Stemp's Intention (Annie Furlong)

### SUNDAY 29th March ... PALM SUNDAY of the Passion of the Lord

8:45 am Procession Before Mass ... Didcot Girls' School Car Park

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Denis & Ruley Rodrick RIP (Rodrick & Fly)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

### MONDAY 30th March ... NO MASS

### TUESDAY 31st March

11:00 Chrism Mass ... St John Cathedral Portsmouth

11:30 am Stations of the Cross St John Wallingford

12:00 noon \*\*NO MASS\*\*

### WEDNESDAY 1st April

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Ian Halpin RIP

### THURSDAY 2nd April ... MAUNDY THURSDAY ... THE EASTER TRIDUUM

7:30 pm Mass English Martyrs Didcot

### FRIDAY 3rd April ... GOOD FRIDAY

3:00 pm Mass English Martyrs Didcot

### SATURDAY 4th April ... HOLY SATURDAY

9:30 am Morning Prayer ... English Martyrs Didcot

11:00 am Swieconkoa: Blessing of Easter Basket ... English Martyrs Didcot

8:00 pm Easter Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

### SUNDAY 5th March ... EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Roberto & Elenita Sagum RIP (Shirly Barthe)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O'Conner, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, Canon Peter Turbitt, Charles Hunt and all the sick and housebound.



### Holy Places Second Collection 2026 — Good Friday

This Second Collection supports sacred places and local Christian communities in the Holy Land. The Second Collection for Holy Places is on **Friday 3 April**. Every Good Friday, churches across the world collect donations that are sent to the Holy Land to support the care of its sacred places and the local Christian communities. Franciscan friars in the Holy Land look after many key Holy Places, including the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, the Basilica of the Annunciation, the Basilica of the Nativity, and numerous other shrines.



The Good Friday Second Collection helps provide “630 homes for families in need; 15 schools with 12,000 students; 1,100 jobs; 270 missionaries; 55 shrines; 6 pilgrim houses; 5 homes for the sick and orphans [and] 3 academic institutions.” The collection supports communities across a broad region that includes Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. To donate, scan the QR code provided, [click here](#) to access the online donation page, use the payment device at our churches, or pay by cash during our second collection after mass on Good Friday. Thank you.



### Easter Second Collection 2026 — Easter Weekend

It is this time of year when we remember our priest in this Easter. You can access our online donation page to make your offering at [Donate to Didcot and Wallingford English Martyrs & St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish Easter Collection - Give as you Live Donate](#) or scan the QR code as provided. You can also use our payment device or pay by cash during second collection on the **Easter weekend 4th and 5th April**. Thank you.



### Children's Liturgy Lenten Promises

Our children have learned about the themes of Fasting, Thankfulness, Prayers, Kindness and Forgiveness this Lent and posted short notes on the Lenten Promise Board. The children will have completed their Promise Board this Sunday. This board will hold over 150 good deeds, prayers, acts of kindness and fasting promises. These 'scraps of paper' will now transform into a wonderful display celebrating the Risen Christ. Thank you all and especially to our wonderful Children Liturgy Team.



### Święconka—The Blessing of Easter Baskets

The blessing of the Easter baskets is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions on Holy Saturday. It is called Święconka. This special event takes place in many of our parishes across the diocese because of our Polish families who enrich our parish and liturgy. Are you Polish? Do you want to organize or be part of those to organise it on Holy Saturday 2nd April? Please let the Parish Office know if you want to help. Thank you.



### English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group

The English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group is going to meet on **Tuesday 31st March**. See you on 31st at 7pm in the Tearoom. Contact Nick Spencer at 07870505520 if you have any questions.

### Legal Professionals Needed

IS THERE A LAWYER IN THE HOUSE? The St Vincent de Paul Society is in need of some informal legal advice to help a client. If you think you can help, please contact Dominic Knight at [dominic.knight100@gmail.com](mailto:dominic.knight100@gmail.com). Thank you.

### Divine Mercy Sunday 2026

Divine Mercy Sunday this year will fall on **Sunday 12th April**. Morning masses will be 9am in Didcot and 11am in Wallingford. This will be followed by the Divine Mercy Sunday Service at 2pm at English Martyrs Didcot. Programme includes a talk explaining the Diary of St Faustina, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Veneration of the Image of Divine Mercy, Confessions. At 3:00pm the Hour of Mercy, Chaplet of Divine Mercy will be sung, entering into the Passion of Christ. Please come and join us on Divine Mercy Sunday. For enquiry, contact [Jess Nalin](#).



### Singers and Readers Needed at St John Wallingford!

We desperately need more singers for our little music group at St John's. You do not need to read music, just have a love of singing. So if you sing high or low please come and join us. We practise on Friday evenings from 7.15 for about an hour in the hall. Access via Wood Street - behind the church. Lectors or Readers are also desperately needed for the Saturday evening masses at St John's. A rota is prepared to ease availability. You don't have to read every week. Contact the Parish Office if you can help.

### St Amand's School Bus Service

English Martyrs Didcot is going to start a school bus service for families in our parish with children attending St Amand's Catholic Primary School. Drop-off and Pick-up point will be at English Martyrs Church Didcot. The bus service will be running for free during its trial period tentatively to start after the Easter Term Break. Please contact the [Parish Office](#) to register your interest.

### EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

#### SATURDAY 4th April ... HOLY SATURDAY

9:30 am Morning Prayer ... English Martyrs Didcot ... Vocations  
11:00 am Swieconka: Blessing of Easter Basket ... English Martyrs Didcot  
8:00 pm Easter Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

#### SUNDAY 5th April ... EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Roberto & Elenita Sagum RIP (Shirly Barthe)  
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

#### MONDAY 6th April ... NO MASS

#### TUESDAY 7th April

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... James Trainer RIP

#### WEDNESDAY 8th April

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

#### THURSDAY 9th April

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford

#### FRIDAY 10th April

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

#### SATURDAY 11th April

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Madeleine Henry RIP (Catherine Sutton)  
4:30 pm Adoration and Vigil Mass St John Wallingford  
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford  
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot  
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

#### SUNDAY 12th April ... SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot  
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford  
2:00 pm Divine Mercy Sunday Service

### Parish Safeguarding

Our Safety Officer for all adults and children safeguarding issues is Stefania Harford. Please contact Stefania via the parish office on 01235 812338. If there is no response and in an emergency, dial 999.